

## **Volunteer Park Landscape Plans – Historical Synopsis**

**1876** the 40 acre parcel purchased by the City for "municipal purposes."

**1903 - 1909** The Olmsted Plan for Volunteer Park follows up on general recommendations for its development contained in the firm's 1903 Comprehensive System plan. Olmsted took advantage of the views and ridge of the hill to create a design for an urban, formal Victorian Park drawing as well from the English pastoral tradition. The central axis balances the observation tower and the conservatory with a large bandstand and a formal parterre planted with roses and exotics with two lily ponds and a reservoir reflecting the view of the city, sound and Olympic Mountains. Around this was a series of open lawns separated by groups of trees and planting beds. The boundaries were screened with trees and mounding shrubbery. Installation 1908 to 1910. Conservatory added 1912.

**1932** The Seattle Art Museum/ Noble Hoggson plan was concerned with the entry to the new Gould designed Art Museum. Softens the severe edges of the building with Japanese Black Pines planted at either end. Nothing planted on the east side.

**1958** The Park Department Engineering Plan is mostly about the sprinklers and sprinkler system of the park. Shows a few clumps of plantings not on the Olmsted plan, and most planting beds as larger than the Olmsted Plan but not as large as the present.

**1971** The Richard Haag Plan reviewed the history of the park, made substantial recommendations concerning the circulation systems, drives and walks, parking and the question of expanding the Art Museum. Emphasizes views, vegetation grouping, screening along 15th Ave., recommends an inventory of trees and shrubs, and predicts their eventual decline. Redefines the spatial zoning.

**1975** The Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places reviews the history of the park, the Olmsted legacy, and the importance of the park in the community and the history of Seattle. It documents the construction of the Seattle Art Museum and improvements to the irrigation, paths and lighting. It proposes no major adjustments in planting to preserve the Olmsted design.

**1988** The Shane Dewald/ Joe Neiford Site Evaluation Plan re-examines the existing condition of the park and plantings. It deals with safety issues, maintenance priorities and budget. It includes a DOPAR and Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks-approved point system for the evaluation of trees and shrubs. The report mentions the maturing plantings and recommends plans to avoid a horticultural crisis in the future. States in many cases, removal is primarily what is needed to renovate the planting beds. The plan recommends taking renovation one bed at a time and completing it before starting another, as budget allowed.

**1991** Plan for the Playground in the northeast corner by Joe Neiford.

**1992** Display Gardens Development Plan by Joe Neiford. Concerned with the Plaza in front of the Museum to the reservoir. The tree and shrub beds around the lily ponds are not true to the Olmsted plan, lack seasonal change and are overgrown. The plan recommends replanting around the Museum building.

**2000** Park Department Plans for renovation of the horse chestnut allee, sidewalk and irrigation system along the main boulevard.